

Testimony of Robert A. Dellapina

Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations

Good afternoon Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. I want to thank you for the opportunity to present myself before this committee today. I consider it a compliment and an honor to have been nominated by Governor Rell for this post.

I will begin by giving you some personal background. I was raised in New York City as the first generation son of Italian immigrants and I am a product of the New York City school system. I attended Pace University in lower Manhattan as an evening student and received my BBA. During that time I met and married Maggie, my wife of 45 years, and became the proud father of my daughter Carolyn and son Gregory.

My first general exposure to labor relations took place when I began working as Plant Personnel Manager for Burndy Corporation in its North Haven plant. Employees were represented by the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE). It was there that I began learning the basics of labor relations and seeing the importance of daily dialogue with employees at all levels.

In 1975 I joined the Hubbell Corporation and relocated to Christiansburg, Virginia as Manager of Industrial Relations. This plant employed 700 employees who were also represented by the IUE.

During my ten years in this position I gained valuable knowledge working in a sometimes contentious labor management environment. Christiansburg is an area of Southwest Virginia not far from the West Virginia coal mines. This proximity resulted in labor and management mimicking some of the tough minded attitudes reflective of West Virginia labor relations.

Although a challenge, especially for a Yankee with a New York accent, I was able, over time to develop a relationship with the union officers which was based on trust. At the same time I was able to steer management toward a more open and cooperative interface with the union. During my tenure this division had no labor stoppages and the lowest number of arbitrations per capita within the entire Corporation.

In 1985 Hubbell asked me to relocate back to Connecticut and fill the newly created position of Corporate Director of Labor Relations. For the next five years I established and led the Labor Relations function for the Corporation. During that period I dealt with eight different unions and was chief spokesman in more than 15 contract negotiations. I also represented the Company in more than forty arbitrations with a 98% win record.

It was also at this time that the Company sponsored me for the University of New Haven Executive MBA program. I attained that degree in 1988.

In 1990 I was offered a promotion to become Vice President of Human Resources for Hubbell's largest business unit located in Bridgeport, although Labor Relations was my field of choice. I accepted the offer because after five years of 80% travel I was ready to settle down and spend more time on the home front.

While in this position the business grew from \$150mm to over \$500mm annually. I had Human Resource responsibility for over 2,000 employees in eight locations, including Puerto Rico and Canada.

After 33 years with Hubbell I retired in 2008. Although I enjoy playing golf and spending time with my grandchildren, I still have the energy and desire to be productive. I believe that my experience, knowledge and skills are well suited for participation on this Board. In particular, my experience with arbitrations and negotiations has taught me to examine issues deliberately and from all sides.

In closing, I appreciate your attention and welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have for me.

Thank you.